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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to answer the following questions: What is educational planning? In what way can educational development contribute to the socioeconomic development of society? How can a plan be effectively implemented? What are the major characteristics of educational development in Japan as compared to that in other countries? The discussion of these questions is presented from the perspective of 22 years of experience in Japanese educational development. (DB)

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STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Kikuo Nishida
Tokyo (Japan)

Discussion Paper prepared for the International Congress
"Planning and Management of Educational Development"
(Mexico City, 26-30 March 1990)

STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

NOVEMBER 20, 1989

by KIKUO NISHIDA

1. Personal Background of This Paper.

1.1 This is the summary report of my personal experience since 1965 until 1987. During this period, I have had many chances to consider the following questions;

a) What is "educational planning"?

b) In what way can educational development contribute to the socio-economic development of society ?

c) How can a plan be effectively implemented ?

d) What are the major characteristics of educational development in Japan as compared to that in other countries ?

1.2 Those chances were provided for me when I was involved in the following jobs;

a) As the Director of Planning Division in Japanese Ministry of Education (1965-71), working with the Central Council for Education for the purpose of designing educational policy in future by means of reviewing the past educational development since 1872,

b) Attending the Education Committee of OECD and participating its confrontation meeting for the review of Japanese education policies (1969),

c) Attending Unesco's World and Regional Conferences of Education Ministers (1965,1966), International Conference on Educational Planning (Paris,1968) and Asian regional meetings on educational planning,

d) As the Secretary-General of Japanese National Commission for Unesco(1971-74), attending Unesco's expert meetings on educational development,

e) As the team leader of Japanese international cooperation for the Philippines (1986-87).

2. What is "Development" and How Can It Take Place ?

2.1 My first assumption concerning the meaning of "development" of society as a whole is as follows;

a) Development is a dynamic process of social change for better living conditions,

b) Social change is promoted by the propagation of social stress,

c) Social stress is induced by the gap between the conscious aspiration of people and their real situation.

2.2 My second assumption concerning the function of education contributing to social development is as follows;

a) Firstly Education excites the frustration of the people so as to become social stress by inspiring their aspiration and, at the same time, giving clear recognition of controversial reality,

b) Then education helps to convert the energy of negative frustration into that of positive motivation by revealing a feasible way of doing through the information of productive knowledge,

c) Continuously education accumulates potential energy of social change by means of capital investment in human talents.

2.3 According to my these assumptions, the development of society as a whole by means of educational development is nothing but a painful process of social change which causes uneasiness in the minds of people, various conflicts and competitions among social groups or strata and political tension against the established authorities. Once a certain pain is felt in some social group, it compels them to take action to avoid it. Such a movement of the group will cause another pain in other group which will start another movement. This is the process of propagating social stress.

I believe, only by this way, in the long run, self-sustained social development can take place in free society in contrast to the rapid but ever unstable change of society by compulsory means of political revolution in other society.

So far as a national leader should hope to promote social development without radical revolution, he should not be afraid of social unstableness which might be caused by educational development, because voluntary movement of the people as the most significant basis of democratic society can be born only through such a painful process.

3. Major Emphases of Planning Strategies.

3.1 The most important emphasis should be placed upon the primary compulsory school education, if we hope to retain self-sustained development of society. The reasons why it is "primary" instead of "higher" education are as follows;

a) The most precious gift of primary education is the training of children about fundamental way of life rather than mere literacy. Because they learn by schooling the practical way of living; i.e. to get up early in the morning, to go to work by definite time every day, to work with patience as scheduled, to work together with others, to be subject to strict evaluation periodically, to climb up to the next stage with merit of achievement; these are nothing but the way of self-sustained development.

The diffusion of primary education up to the enrollment ratio of more than 90% for the period of at least a half century will ensure the productive working habit of working population which is one of the most essential requirements of social development. It should be noticed that such unique function of schooling as above mentioned cannot be substituted by other mode of education, for example, even by the modern new media education.

b) Since primary education is the sole entrance to upper schools, those who were not enrolled in it or droped out of it can not have any chance to develop their intellectual capability. As they have no access to higher education, colleges and universities of their country, how much highly equipped they might be, are always losing as much percentage of qualified students as that of drop-out in primary education.

3.2 In educational planning for the development of human resources, the middle and lower classes of income are the most important target population in society. This recommendation is not based upon any specific ideological viewpoint, socialistic or humanistic, but it is derived from the assumptions as mentioned in Section 2.

I assumed that social development is promoted by the social stress which will be induced by the frustration of people when they get educated. Therefore, the more they are frustrated, the more they will become motivated to initiate constructive movement for social change. As the lower income class of society is the most frustrated group, they are most likely to become prime movers for social change. Moreover, they have no alternative but to share a common destiny with the people with whom they live, whilst high talents from upper social class are apt to escape from their native land. So this emphasis aims at the effectiveness and efficiency of educational investment.

Some national leaders of developing countries have an inclination to establish a monumental institute of higher education rather than to take effective policy measures for the diffusion of primary education as far as to the bottom of society. The former may be a splendid demonstration of academic national dignity, whilst the latter needs an enormous amount of administrative endeavour, time and money and yet affords poor reputation for the leaders as long as they are alive. So it may be quite natural that new leaders of developing countries become reluctant to place policy emphasis upon primary education and target population of lower social class.

However, I like to refer to the Japanese experience in the late 19th Century. It has been a consistent administrative belief of the national authorities to keep highest priority of primary compulsory education even though the term of schooling was only 4 years owing to the scanty financial resources. It took 40 years to attain the enrollment ratio of 98% in primary education while, at that time, it was only 5% and 1.3% in secondary and tertiary education.

Then what happened ? Within 40 years, social classes

which dominated for centuries as rigid strata to segregate from each other have dramatically disappeared and so many talents in various fields came out from the old lower class. The most radical change of minds happened in the class-room of primary school, because all children from various social classes, once they sat in the same class, were quite innocent and honest to compete with each other so as to realize true aspect of individuals notwithstanding their social origin. And it was that period when the firm basis of modernization and industrialization of Japan was founded.

It is my personal belief that no country can skip such a period before he can start self-sustained development.

3.3 As for the qualitative development of universal primary education, it may be needless to say that the most essential factor is the quality of teachers. Then the main problem is how to secure it by effective policy measures.

At first, how can we identify the good quality of teachers ? It seems to me that the key factor of good teacher is the enthusiasm with love of children rather than intellectual excellence. Such personalities are likely found in the middle class of local community. Usually they are much concerned about community development and willing to devote themselves to the education of children for their lives without too much ambitions to escape from their native places.

It was s successful example of Japan, at the beginning stage of modern school education in the late 19th Century, that all normal schools for teacher training, 4 years schooling after at least 8 years primary education, were established in each local community in order to facilitate to invite native youngsters to the normal schools and to allocate them to primary schools within the communities so as to become informal counselors for community development with regard to agricultural production as well as family life, health program and cultural innovation of traditional events.

The important role of the Central Government was to make those normal schools attractive to youngsters and their families by means of providing full-support scholarship and, it may sound so striking, the exemption from the duty of

military service because it was the belief of the Government that the diffusion of primary universal education must be the basis of national unity and security.

3.4 Another aspect of planning strategy is concerned with the structure of education system. When we reviewed the development of school system of Japan in the past 100 years, we found it was just repetition of two alternative trends, the one was the streaming (differentiation of courses according to different career programs) of school types and the other was integration of diversified school types into more general target.

Teleological arguement seemed to be persuasive when some specific manpower demand became urgent and it resulted in the diversification of school types. Then after several years, when the quality of students in the specific field was proved to be unsatisfactory, general course was expanded instead of specialized courses.

From the viewpoint of developing human resources, these historical experiences show that it is impossible to invite satisfactory talents to a special course for training specific manpower, so far as the course is a blind alley of school system. Because, at the crossroad of choicing the course leading to a blind alley, youngsters will be threatened as if they hear a voice which says "Abandon your hope here!"

In order to overcome the dilemma between social demand and students' ambition, it is recommended that, at all turning points of course diversification, students should have a chance to change their courses to another, more academic or vocational, so far as they are proved to be so qualified.

4. How to Secure Effective Implementation of Plan ?

4.1 However logically and technically elaborated an educational plan might be, it cannot secure its effective implemation by itself, because it is a design of dynamic social change as mentioned in Section 2. If the basic assumption about social conditions in which various social forces interact with each other is not valid, the plan can

never work.

One of the most liable mistake is an erroneous assumption neglecting the ecological and historical background of target society. Especially, as planning methodology has been developed in the industrialized countries in Northern hemisphere, it may be remarkably biased to the specific conditions of those countries. For example, people as Japanese living on small islands subject to frequent flood and earthquake with climate to be frozen in cold winter and very limited natural resources have no alternative but to work very hard and export elaborate goods for survival. These conditions cannot be applicable to tropical countries where the system of incentives is entirely different.

We must carefully study the ecological conditions which are most decisive for the system of vales and incentives for initiating voluntary work. It might be beyond the function of educational planner, but, without such endeavour, educational planning cannot be useful for the development of tropical countries.

4.2 Besides ecological conditions, cultural traditions fostered historically are also important factor to be considered in educational planning. It was my bitter experience that, in a certain country where I was involved in the technical cooperation program for training engineers, I found in an article of newpaper engineers are classified as a kind of white collar job. Then just I could understand that why students of Engineering Faculty do not show much attention for practical laboratory work.

The students were much concerned about the examination of Government Board for the certificate of engineers, because, in that country, "engineer" was a social status which was approved by the Government and had been esteemed since the colonial days when most engineers came to this counry from western Europe with "white collar" suits. In such cultural climate, international cooperation for providing scientific eqiupments for laboratory work could not be effective and it seemed to be almost hopeless to encourage the development of indigenous technology by themselves.

4.3 The ecological and historical background of society is important basis for designing effective educational plan. However, in order to seure the effective implementation of the plan, another policy measures are indispensable. Those are the provision of utilitarian incentives for the people to be educated. That is to say that any Government policy for educational development cannot be accepted by people unless they can expect any realistic advantage by being educated, for example higher income or promotion, because to send children to school or learning at school cannot be done without any sacrifice on their conventional lives.

5. Is It Possible or Necessary to Make Both Ends Meet, Demand and Supply of Manpower ?

5.1 Educational planners have been blamed on account of social conflicts caused by the unbalance between the demand and supply of manpower. However, I am quite skeptical about the possibility of adjusting both ends to meet. Because manpower demand depends upon the economic growth rate which is usually controlled according to rather short-range economic plan, while supply of manpower is an uncontrollable demographic phenomenon. Even the relative share of a certain course in total number of school graduates can be controlled very slowly by adjusting the number of entrants for the specific course. So it is my opinion that long-term economic plan shall be designed in accordance with the supply of manpower from school graduates as given postulate.

5.2 Moreover I have found an important paradoxical fact that only such unbalance can make re-distribution of human resources among various sectors of industry so as to promote industrial innovation in some sector. Some industrial sector in Japan could adopt a large number of high talents during the serious depression after the Second World War and made radical modernization of management system of business which led the sector to the top of industry to-day.

Finally, I am asking to myself "What is the meaning of a reasonable educational planning ?"